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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 001695

SIPDIS

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JCS FOR J-5
OSD FOR ISA-NATO

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PEACEKEEPING REMAINS SENSITIVE ISSUE IN...

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Embassy The Hague

UNCLASSIFIED

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SUBJECT: PEACEKEEPING REMAINS SENSITIVE ISSUE IN THE
NETHERLANDS

REFS: A) THE HAGUE 588 B) THE HAGUE 980

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION

1. SUMMARY: SINCE THE FALL OF THE SREBRENICA ENCLAVE IN 1995, DUTCH POLITICIANS HAVE REPEATEDLY BEEN REVIEWING THEIR PEACEKEEPING DECISIONMAKING PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT DUTCH TROOPS WILL NEVER AGAIN BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY THE US, NATO, UN OR EU. END SUMMARY.

2. DUTCH POLITICIANS SAY THEY LOST THEIR INNOCENCE IN SREBRENICA. IN THE EARLY 1990S, THE DO-GOOD DUTCH CHERISHED THE ILLUSION THAT THEY COULD BRING PEACE AND STABILITY THROUGH PEACEKEEPING. THE TRAGEDY OF THOUSANDS OF MUSLIMS, MOST PARLIAMENTARIANS AND CITIZENS HAVE NEVER STOPPED WONDERING HOW THIS COULD HAVE EVER HAPPENED.

3. SREBRENICA STILL PRESENTS THE DUTCH BODY POLITIC WITH A DILEMMA: MOST DUTCH REMAIN CONVINCED OF THE NEED TO PROMOTE THE INTERNATIONAL RULE OF LAWS, DUTCH POLICY MAKERS SINCE 1995 HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DEFINE ON WHAT TERMS THEY MIGHT AGAIN PARTICIPATE. RESPONDING TO PARLIAMENTARY AND

4. IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, DUTCH POLITICS HAS BECOME OBSESSED WITH REVIEWING AND ANALYZING PAST OPERATIONS. THE SREBRENICA TRAGEDY WAS, AND STILL IS, THE SUBJECT OF VARIOUS INVESTIGATIONS. THE PARLIAMENT SET UP A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE HOW THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT CAME TO DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS, THE SC

5. THE PARLIAMENT ALSO ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO EVALUATE THE KOSOVO CRISIS FROM THE DUTCH PERSPECTIVE. THIS WAS ANOTHER LESSONS-LEARNED EXERCISE IN MAKING SIZEABLE MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS THAT THE DUTCH BELIEVE THEY MAKE (REFTELS).

6. THE ABSENCE OF A UNSC MANDATE FOR OPERATION ALLIED FORCE TRIGGERED A DEBATE ON CONDITIONS THAT PERMIT HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IN THE EVENT

7. ALL OF THESE EFFORTS REFLECT A FRANTIC SEARCH FOR OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS. BUT THEY ALSO GIVE EVIDENCE OF CONSIDERABLE UNDERLYING EMOTIONAL RESERVATIONS. RISK AVOIDANCE SEEMS TO BE THE WATCHWORD IN TODAY'S THE HAGUE. IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THE DUTCH ARE DISTANCING THEMSELVES FROM FUTURE PKO'S, ALTHOUGH THEY WILL SEEK DIFFERENT TERMS. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL HEAR THE DUTCH DEMAND SOUND ARGUMENTS, REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE PERIODS, AND LIKELY SEEK GUARANTEES ABOUT CONSULTATION AND DECISIONMAKING BEFORE COMMITTING TO NATO, UN OR EU DEPLOYMENTS IN THE FUTURE.

FENDRICK